

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7168

INFO USMISSION USUN

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TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS RESTATE THEIR POSITION

REF: SANTIAGO A-40

1. SUMMARY: CARACAS-BASED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (PDC) EXILE JAIME CASTILLO RELEASED A SIX PAGE STATEMENT OF THE PDC'S PUBLIC POSITION IN EARLY OCTOBER. "ONE COUNTRY FOR ALL" IS NOW CIRCULATING WIDELY IN CHILE BUT APPARENTLY CAUSING LITTLE STIR. LONG IN GESTATION, THE MESSAGE TAKES INTO ACCOUNT PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S PROPOSED TRANSITION PLAN AND CALLS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL MOVEMENT TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY -- THEREBY BRINGING CURRENT THE PARTY PLATFORM CIRCULATED BY THE PDC EARLY THIS YEAR (REFAIR). PDCER'S TELL US THAT THE GOC, SO FAR AT LEAST, HAS NOT INTENSIFIED PRESSURE AGAINST THEM AS A RESULT OF THE MANIFESTO. END SUMMARY

2. BACKGROUND: ACCORDING TO THE PDC LEADERSHIP, CASTILLO WROTE AN EARLY DRAFT OF THE MESSAGE IN MAY OR JUNE. THE FRUSTRATED PDC IDEOLOGUE, HUSTLED OUT OF SANTIAGO BY SECURITY FORCES IN AUGUST 1976, HAS BEEN PERSISTENTLY TRYING TO KEEP HIS HAND IN

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PARTY COUNCILS FROM AFAR. HE CONTINUES TO ENJOY THE RESPECT OF THE LEADERSHIP HERE. HIS INITIAL DRAFT HAD TO BE RECAST TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT PINOCHET'S JULY ANNOUNCEMENT OF A TRANSITION PLAN AND WAS CHECKED OVER AND PARTIALLY REWRITTEN BY PDC LEADERS HERE BEFORE RELEASE. THE DOCUMENT IS WRITTEN TO APPEAL TO BOTH DOMESTIC AND EXILE AUDIENCES.

3. ONE COUNTRY FOR ALL: THE MESSAGE OPENS WITH THE ASSERTION THAT A PROCESS OF RETURNING TO DEMOCRACY IS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. EVEN MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA (AND THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF) SUPPORT THE IDEA -- ALBEIT A WORRIED GOVERNMENT, AFRAID OF POPULAR DEMANDS FOR QUICK RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY CAN NOT BRING ITSELF TO ELIMINATE ITS SECRET POLICE NOR RELINQUISH ITS MOST ONEROUS EMERGENCY POWERS. DEEP SOCIETAL CLEAVAGES, EXACERBATED BY THE "MASSIVE USE OF FORCE AGAINST CERTAIN SECTORS", COMPLICATE THE RESTORATION PROCESS. OF THREE WAYS TO GO, THE PDC DISCARDS VIOLENCE OUT OF HAND AS "NOT AMONG THE HISTORICAL POSSIBILITIES TODAY". IT ALSO DISCARDS AN INDEFINITE OR LENGTHY MILITARY REGIME, WHICH WOULD ALSO INCREASE SOCIAL DIVISIONS. BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT FAIL BECAUSE THEY USE AUTHORITARIANISM TO "PROTECT" THE CITIZENRY'S RIGHTS. THUS THE CENTER COURSE -- RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY SOON -- BECOMES AN HISTORICAL NECESSITY.

4. THE PAPER THEN DESCRIBES "THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS" FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY.

- A RENEWED FAITH IN THE TIMELESS, PROVEN VALUES OF DEMOCRACY;

- A REDEDICATION (REAGRUPAMIENTO) OF THE CHILEAN PEOPLE TO COMMON VALUES AND PURPOSES;

- A NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR RESTORING DEMOCRACY. THIS MOVEMENT WOULD BE POLITICAL IN THE BROAD, NOT NARROW, SENSE. EVERYONE SHOULD JOIN, INDIVIDUALLY AND THROUGH SOCIETAL GROUPS (UNIVERSITIES, LABOR, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ARMED FORCES). ALTHOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD PARTICIPATE THEY WOULD NOT DIRECT THE MOVEMENT. NEITHER THE RIGHT NOR THE LEFT SHOULD BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE ADJUDICATORS. NOR WOULD "THE FORMATION OF TRADITIONAL POLITICAL FRONTS, INEVITABLY DIRECTED FROM ABROAD, HELP THE CAUSE OF RESTORING DEMOCRACY".

5. STAGES FOR RESTORATION: THE PDC SEES THE TRANSITION AS A "GRADUAL", THREE STAGE PROCESS:

- A) IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS BY DROPPING STATE OF SIEGE AND EMERGENCY ZONE POWERS, BY BRINGING THE SECURITY SERVICES COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL AND BY REINSTATING FULL LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION;

- B) PROMPT STEP BY STEP MOVEMENT TO REINSTATE THE FREEDOMS OF ASSOCIATION AND MEETING, UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY, LABOR RIGHTS AND, WITHIN A YEAR, TO HOLD ELECTIONS FOR DELEGATES TO A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH WOULD PREPARE A DRAFT CONSTITUTION TO BE SUBMITTED TO A NATIONAL PLEBISCITE AND

- C) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION, THE NEW CHARTER WOULD BE BASED UPON THE PRINCIPLES IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

6. THE PDC MESSAGE CONCLUDES WITH A CALL TO ACTION: THE ARMED

FORCES MUST REALIZE THAT PROLONGED RULE WILL HURT THEM AND THE SOCIETY BUT THAT THEY WILL HAVE A KEY ROLE IN THE NEW SYSTEM BEING CALLED FOR; POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ASKED TO FORGET THEIR IDEOLOGICAL DEBATES AND THINK FIRST OF THE COUNTRY; STUDENTS, WORKERS, INTELLECTUALS AND WOMEN ARE PROMISED THE PDC'S SUPPORT FOR THEIR ASPIRATIONS; AND PDC MEMBERS ARE TOLD TO STAY LOYAL TO THE PARTY'S BASIC PHILOSOPHY. THE PDC OFFERS TO WORK IN GOOD FAITH FOR THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

7. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS BRACKETED THE MESSAGE WITH INTRODUCTORY AND CLOSING PARAGRAPHS ASSERTING THEIR RIGHT TO PRODUCE THE MANIFESTO AND DESCRIBING IT AS A SERIOUS, GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO HEAL WOUNDS IN THE SOCIETY.

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8. COMMENT: WE FIND LITTLE NEW IN THE MESSAGE. ONCE AGAIN THE PDC MAKES CLEAR THAT IT DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY, SEEING A MAJOR ROLE FOR THE ARMED FORCES FOR SOME TIME TO COME. IN TERMS OF SPECIFICS, THE CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE END OF KEY EMERGENCY POWERS (THOSE CONTROLLING ASSEMBLY, SPEECH, PRESS, ETC.) IS, AS PDCER'S THEMSELVES ADMIT TO US, MORE A LENS TO DIRECT FUTURE PRESSURES THAN A REALISTIC EXPECTATION. THE MESSAGE'S MAJOR PURPOSE, BESIDES PROVING THAT THE PDC STILL EXISTS, IS TO ENCOURAGE A COMMON FRONT IN WHICH POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD OSTENSIBLY BE ONLY THE JUNIOR PARTNERS. PRESUMABLY MOST PDC LEADERS BELIEVE THIS APPROACH FACILITIATES CONTACTS WITH GROUPS OF DIFFERING POLITICAL PERSUASIONS WITHOUT THE COSTS OF A POLITCAL ALLIANCE.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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